

Underground Storage Tanks And Brownfields Sites: Questions And Answers



WHAT IS THE USTFIELDS

The USTfields Initiative was developed by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Office of Underground Storage Tanks (OUST) to address abandoned or idle industrial and commercial property where redevelopment is hindered by petroleum contamination from abandoned, federally-regulated underground storage tanks (USTs.) These properties are often former gasoline service stations, car dealerships, or other industrial sites that have been abandoned and left undeveloped due to fears of liability and expensive cleanup. EPA is committed to helping states, communities, tribes, and territories address potential contamination, restore environmental quality, and foster reuse of these once productive properties. One way that EPA is helping is through this month's award of up to \$100,000 each to states and tribes for 40 new USTfields Pilots.

WHAT ARE USTFIELDS PILOTS?

USTfields Pilots are abandoned underground storage tank sites where award funds will be used to assess and clean up petroleum contamination to prepare the sites for reuse. In November 2000, EPA selected ten states to receive up to \$100,000 each from the Leaking Underground Storage Tank (LUST) Trust Fund to begin this work. In June 2002, EPA is continuing the initiative by awarding an additional 40 state and tribal pilots through a competitive process. While the money from the LUST Trust Fund cannot be used for reuse activities in these pilots, EPA believes that reuse will be fostered by cleaning up and removing the barrier of petroleum contamination from these sites. The USTfields Pilots are demonstrating what state, tribal, federal, and private entities in partnership can do to clean up and bring petroleum-impacted sites back into productive use.

HOW WERE THE 40 NEW USTFIELDS PILOTS SELECTED?

In August 2001, EPA published a notice in the Federal Register requesting that states and Indian tribes submit proposals for the funding of up to 40 USTfields Pilot awards. States and tribes submitted their proposals to EPA in November 2001. The proposals were reviewed by both EPA Regional and Headquarters review panels and were evaluated according to the criteria published in the proposal guidelines for the awards. Final selection of the pilots was made by EPA senior management and took into account geographic factors and other preferences stated in the proposal guidelines.

HOW DO USTFIELDS DIFFER FROM BROWNFIELDS, AND HOW DO THESE NEW USTFIELDS PILOTS FIT IN WITH THE RECENTLY SIGNED BROWNFIELDS LAW?

"Brownfields" are abandoned, idle, or underused industrial or commercial facilities where expansion or redevelopment is complicated by perceived or actual environmental contamination. Until President Bush signed the Small Business Liability Relief and Brownfields Revitalization Act ("Brownfields Law") (P.L. 107-118) in January 2002, the EPA Brownfields program was generally unable to fund brownfields sites contaminated with petroleum because of the exclusion of petroleum under the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA.) "USTfields" are similar to Brownfields but address actual or perceived petroleum contamination from federally-regulated underground storage tanks. OUST began the USTfields Initiative in 2000 to address Brownfields sites where CERCLA limited EPA's involvement because of petroleum contamination. Of the estimated 450,000 brownfields across the nation, approximately half contain petroleum contamination.



The newly-signed Brownfields Law expands the authority of EPA's Brownfields program to now include certain "relatively low risk" petroleum-impacted sites. EPA plans to publish new guidelines implementing the Brownfields Law in the Federal Register in fall 2002 and to grant awards early in fiscal year 2003. The 50 USTfields Pilots are important for the implementation of this new legislation because the lessons learned by the states and localities through these USTfields Pilots will be transferred to petroleum-impacted sites within the Brownfields program when it is fully implemented in 2003.

WILL EPA AWARD MORE USTFIELDS PILOTS IN THE FUTURE?

The new Brownfields Law will make available funding to clean up and promote the revitalization of relatively low-risk petroleum-contaminated sites.

WHERE CAN I FIND MORE INFORMATION ON THE USTFIELDS INITIATIVE & THE PILOTS?

For general information on EPA's USTfields Initiative and the pilots, see www.epa.gov/oust/ustfield.

Questions may be directed to Steven McNeely at 703.603-7164 or mcneely.steven@epa.gov or Elizabeth McDermott at 703.603-7178 or mcdermott.elizabeth@epa.gov. The mailing address is: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Office of Underground Storage Tanks, Mail Code 5401G, 1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20460.

For information on a particular USTfields Pilot(s), contact:

EPA Region 1: Thomas Burns , burns.thomas@epa.gov

EPA Region 2: Ben Singh, singh.ben@epa.gov

EPA Region 3: Karen Bowen, bowen.karen@epa.gov

EPA Region 4: Dana Hayworth, hayworth.dana@epa.gov

EPA Region 5: Kevin Hill, hill.kevin@epa.gov

EPA Region 6: Christine Cherrett; cherrett.christine@epa.gov

EPA Region 7: Janet Hallier; hallier.janet@epa.gov

EPA Region 8: Jo Ann Taylor, taylor.jo@epa.gov

EPA Region 9: Matt Small, small.matthew@epa.gov

EPA Region 10: Wally Moon, moon.wally@epa.gov

